

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

61-04

12/23/04

LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES RISK-BASED VERIFICATION TESTING PROGRAM – PHASE 1: INTRODUCTION OF A NEW SAMPLING PROJECT – RTE001

I. PURPOSE

This notice introduces the addition of a new *Listeria monocytogenes* risk-based verification testing program, RTE001, for the sampling of only post-lethality exposed ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products. The scheduling this new sampling project will be implemented in January 2005.

II. BACKGROUND

As discussed in the interim final rule that addressed *L. monocytogenes* in RTE meat and poultry product (68 FR 34207, June 6, 2003), FSIS is committed to verifying through inspection activities and sampling activities that official establishments that produce certain RTE meat and poultry products prevent product adulteration by the pathogenic environmental contaminant *L. monocytogenes*. Inspection program personnel verify that establishments are complying with 9 CFR 430.4 as set out in FSIS Directive 10,240.4 and collect samples of RTE products as part of FSIS risk-based verification testing program.

To date, inspection program personnel collect RTE sample under the following sampling project codes:

ALLRTE: Under this project, inspection program personnel randomly collect any RTE product (post-lethality exposed and non-post-lethality exposed RTE product) produced at official establishments, and

RTERISK1: Under this project, inspection program personnel follow the product priority list in FSIS Directive 10,240.4, Chapter 3, *CSIs Responsibilities for Collecting Samples of RTE*, to determine how to select a RTE product for FSIS verification sampling. Under

DISTRIBUTION: Inspection
Offices; T/A Inspectors; Plant Mgt;
T/A Plant Mgt; TRA; ABB; TSC;
Import Offices

NOTICE EXPIRES: 1/1/06

OPI: OPPED

this project inspection program personnel collect both post-lethality exposed and non-post-lethality exposed RTE product produced at official establishments.

III. NEW SAMPLING PROJECT CODE RTE001

In Chapter 3 of FSIS Directive 10,240.4, FSIS stated it would continue to develop and implement its *L. monocytogenes* risk-based verification testing program and notify inspection program personnel via issuances. Therefore, this notice announces the third project for the collection of RTE products. The focus of this new project is to sample at establishments producing post-lethality exposed product that pose the greatest risk for *L. monocytogenes*. To ensure that the product at such establishments are adequately tested, the Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS) based its scheduling for this new project on the information that establishments have submitted via FSIS Form 10,240-1 (See FSIS Notice 49-04). The introduction of this project in January 2005 is phase 1. FSIS will issue further instructions in 2005 for the implementation of phase 2 for the collection of samples under this sampling project. Phase 2 will include a more extensive assessment of individual food safety systems, particularly those that employ a post-lethality treatment or an antimicrobial suppressing agent or process.

The new project is set out as follows:

RTE001: Under this project, inspection program personnel follow the risk-based priority list in Attachment 1 to determine which type of post-lethality exposed RTE product to select. This project includes only the collection of post-lethality exposed product.

NOTE: The RTE001 project was designed to consider the alternative, 1, 2, or 3, of 9 CFR 430.4 an establishment chooses to produce post-lethality exposed RTE products. Therefore, inspection program personnel only need to use the priority list in Attachment 1 when selecting a post-lethality exposed RTE product under this sampling project code.

IV. Follow-up Sampling and Intensified Verification Testing

In order to better ensure that the FSIS risk-based verification testing program is effective, whenever a RTE product sample tests positive for a microbial pathogen, the District Manager or his or her designee may request follow-up samples via email to the Sampling Forms – Headquarters Outlook address as instructed in FSIS Notice 60-04.

Also, the DM or his or her designee may request collection of samples under Intensified Verification Testing (IVT) in cases such as when an FSIS or establishment sample of a food contact surface that comes into contact with a post-lethality exposed RTE product tests positive for a pathogen of public health concern. IVT sampling may include product sampling, direct product contact surface sampling, or environmental

sampling. District Manager or his or her designee may request follow-up samples via email to the Sampling Forms – Headquarters Outlook address as instructed in FSIS Notice 60-04.

Philip S. Derfler/s/

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development

Post-lethality Exposed RTE Microbiology Verification Testing Program Attachment 1

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| PROJECT NUMBER AND NAME | RTE001 – Risk-based Verification Testing of ONLY Post-lethality Exposed RTE Meat and Poultry Products |
| PRODUCT TO SAMPLE | <p>Select the <u>highest risk post-lethality exposed RTE product</u> produced at the time of collection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deli-meats that are sliced in the federal establishment 2. Deli-meats shipped whole from the federal establishment (this does not include cook-in-bag products; only those exposed post-lethality) 3. Hotdog Products 4. Deli salads, patés, and meat spreads 5. Fully cooked type products (other than cooked products in 1-4 above) 6. Fermented products 7. Dried products 8. Salt-cured products 9. Products labeled as “Keep Frozen” <p>NOTE: DO NOT sample the same lot of a product for more than one sample collection project (ALL RTE, RTERISK1, RTE001).</p> |
| ANALYZED FOR | <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> AND <i>Salmonella</i> . If product is a dry or semi-dry fermented sausage or fully cooked meat patties, it will also be analyzed for <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7. |
| SPECIAL COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS | Randomly select a day, shift, and time within the sample collection time frame indicated in block 4 of the FSIS form 10,210-3. Collect enough INTACT product so that at least TWO pounds of meat or poultry is submitted to the laboratory for analysis. If an intact sample of the product is too large to submit to the laboratory, ask the establishment to slack fill or short weight a package to two pounds without any changes to its processing operations. If this is not possible, contact the laboratory to see if a larger shipping container is available. |

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| SAMPLE REQUEST FORM | Fill out the form according to the instructions in this notice. Place the sample request form and a copy of the label in a plastic bag and place the plastic bag into the shipping container with the sample. If no sample is collected, complete Block 33 and mail the form to the laboratory listed in Block 9. |
| ESTABLISHMENT NOTIFICATION | Give establishment management sufficient notification of sampling so that the product represented by the sample may be held. Holding product is at the option of the establishment. |
| SAMPLE SECURITY | Identify sample and seal shipping container per FSIS Directive 7355.1 Rev. 2. |
| SPECIAL SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS | Ship AFTER product represented by the sample has passed pre-shipment review. Complete all requested information in block 28 of the sample request form. Ship refrigerated or frozen, using sufficient frozen coolant to keep samples cold during transit. Ship samples Monday through Friday so that they arrive at the laboratory overnight. A sample box shipped on Fridays must have a Saturday Delivery sticker on it and Saturday delivery marked on the shipping label to avoid delivery delays and discarded samples. Do not ship samples on Saturdays or on the day before a Federal holiday. |
| REFERENCES | FSIS Directive 10,240.4; FSIS Directive 7355.1 Rev. 2 |